

## Christmas at the Hippodrome

An Observance Unusual in Theatres  
in This City.

Christmas has more significance at the Hippodrome than it has at most of the theatres because the company there is permanent. This is particularly true of the ballet and the chorus, in which one sees at each production the same girls who started in half a dozen years ago under the direction of Signor Romeo and



A CHRISTMAS TREE IN THE DRESSING ROOM.

Manuel Klein, who are still members of the Hippodrome's staff. In this way the community spirit, which the modern idea of theatrical management has practically destroyed, is still kept alive at the Hippodrome and is manifested at Christmas in the exchange of gifts. Heads of departments reap at this time the reward of their labor during the year. Grateful notes are not to be despised, but silk umbrellas help to keep the rain off. R. H. Burnside, ballet director and producer, is always particularly well remembered. Last year the company gave him two silver vases.

## Mr. Raines's Fortune

Luck Attends a Desperate Effort to Get Relief From Present Ills.

Sunday night supper at Mrs. Elsie Glasford's boarding house and nobody down, that is, scarcely anybody. Of course Mr. Raines had sought into his coat at first sound of the bell, but then he didn't count for anything when his wife was present.

The meagre potato salad trembled with nervousness, leaves from the back yard and the salted butter raised with flour, as the other boarders disdainfully described them, were quite good enough for Mr. Joe Raines. His work called him out weekdays, at a clock in the morning after breakfasting on a slice of bread and a glass of milk left on the kitchen table over night, and sent him home to dine late. Of course he was down to get his third square of the week.

"Ah, this is something like," chuckled Mr. Raines as he helped himself liberally to the vegetable mess.

"I wish more of them were like you," Mr. Raines sighed. Mrs. Glasford, "What do they expect after the Sunday dinner I give? You never make a fuss."

"I don't have to," muttered Mr. Raines darkly, and as the landlady looked expectantly toward the door, he helped himself to two biscuits for one.

"I do believe our latest acquisition is coming after all," said Mrs. Glasford. "Though he said he had died on the train. Now, isn't that real friendly of him? It is Mr. Orvis Knowles, Mr. Raines, who has taken our second story front. He represents millions. I do wish Mrs. Parrett were here tonight, but that is all ways the way. Hark, what's that?"

The confidant noise in being translated told Mrs. Glasford's wish was about to be granted. Miss Parrett, while descending in the dark had nearly tripped the obedient new owner under foot. They were now offering and accepting apologies.

Miss Parrett had practiced the physical culture she taught either too much or too little and her charms were worn or wasted in consequence. Mr. Orvis Knowles was a tiny person as he was of manner.

"In a business way," asked Mr. Knowles, "in response to Mr. Raines's bow."

"Head of the business room at the Mammoth and Grampus Works," answered Mr. Raines. "You are on the road, aren't you?"

"I do have to travel a bit now and then in my confidential work for the interests, but that hardly

be taken care of comfortably. There are some twenty-six changes a day made here, thirteen at each performance, and as may be supposed it is necessary to have space enough in each dressing room to swing a cat. Just about that amount of space is afforded and there is apparently nothing that produces such lasting friendships as the constant interchange of rabbit feet, cosmetics and hairpins.

Each dressing room has fifteen, twenty, twenty-five tenants as the case may be, and these communities, sharing good times and gossip, are in turn divided up into still smaller cliques of two, three, four or five. Many of these cliques share the same flats and lodging rooms or board in the same places. Anniversaries flourish in these groups. Birthdays are not forgotten, wedding and divorce days are kept and Christmas is the holiday of holidays.

In the dressing rooms trees are planted before time on top of the dressing tables, banked with rouge pots and vanity boxes to keep them in place; stockings are hung in obvious places; packages wrapped in tissue paper and decorated with sprays of holly and scarlet ribbons are hidden plainly in sight. Many of the young women give Christmas dinners at their flats.

There are twenty children in the present production at the Hippodrome, some of them sharing with their mothers the burden of the family support. Four young women who started twenty years ago under Mr. Burnside's management at the Alhambra, London, are billed on this year's Hippodrome programme as the Mordecai sisters, and one of them has a young daughter in the cast. Children's Christmas trees are sprinkled all over the place. One of the chorus girls explains to you as she unwraps a large woolly dog with a music box in its interior that while she has to limit her giving this year to the subscription presents and to the fifteen who share her dressing room she intends to give something to each of the children.

A particular Christmas tree this year has been under the superintendence of Miss Spellman, who gives what time she can afford from it to the popular diversion of the bears, among whom are a number of small brown babies, who have been very impatient for the last month to celebrate their first Christmas. Several provision stores have sent in the honey for the bottles which will form the principal decoration for the tree. The guests are to have their hair specially brushed, to wear new scarlet bows and to be garlanded generously with sprigs of holly.

After Miss Spellman has shown you her preparations you are allowed to have a peep at Lena, the mother elephant who is knitting some socks for Baby Mine, who is also celebrating her first Christmas and who has had cold feet over since the advent of the bears. It is hoped that the socks will make everything all right.

There is a regular sick fund established at the Hippodrome. Every one contributes to it to the extent of 10 cents a week, which entitles an invalid to the



THE BABY BEARS' CHRISTMAS TREE.

Here the basement door banged open and shut, and Mr. Raines blew in between, with a surprisingly large part of the storm. The dress of the doll barometer on the mantel turned to the hue of great precipitation as he slipped into the chair by his consort's side and reached for a cracker.

Mrs. Raines looked him over and then with a darted across an evening paper that was rapidly returning to wood pulp in the sock of his side pocket.

"You didn't buy the *Quotidian* of all things, Joseph!" she gasped.

"That's exactly the thing I just did buy," retorted Mr. Raines doggedly, and the company turned blue like the doll before a squall.

But Mrs. Raines was curious, one could read that in the converging tilt of her nose and chin. She wanted to know, and she wanted to know right away. She could attend later to her husband's extravagance. "Excuse me," she said, and she spread the damp sheets over the butter and the stewed tomatoes.

Certain over black headlines on the first page caused Mrs. Raines to start. "The missing heir to the vast medieval fortune of the De la Reynes found at last," she read wonderingly. "He is a fellow townsman and a worthy artisan. Truth stranger than fiction. Mr. Joseph Raines of the Mammoth and Grampus Works admits the soft impeachment. His wife, long prominent in altruistic circles."

"Joseph, dear Joseph," she cried, "what does this mean?"

About five million sterling, spot cash, besides a few hundred castles scattered about the United Kingdom," began Mr. Raines calmly. "I was going to keep it a secret."

But what Mr. Raines was going to do was lost in what the tabloid did. The boarders in a rush embraced the happy pair and then tore the paper into shreds to make sure there was no mistake.

"I always knew there was something noble about dear Mr. Raines," gurgled Miss Parrett.

"Now you understand, between you and me, why I came here," whispered Mr. Knowles. "I sent my principals straight over the moment I spotted him. But I found something even more precious than the ransom I'll get. And he pressed her hand tenderly under the faithful."

"You are so sublimely contained and sufficient, Orvis, it frightens me."

Miss Parrett breathed back, "Any ordinary man would be herding his straight razor the moment I spotted him. Silence is golden in high finance, my dear," explained the little man oracularly.

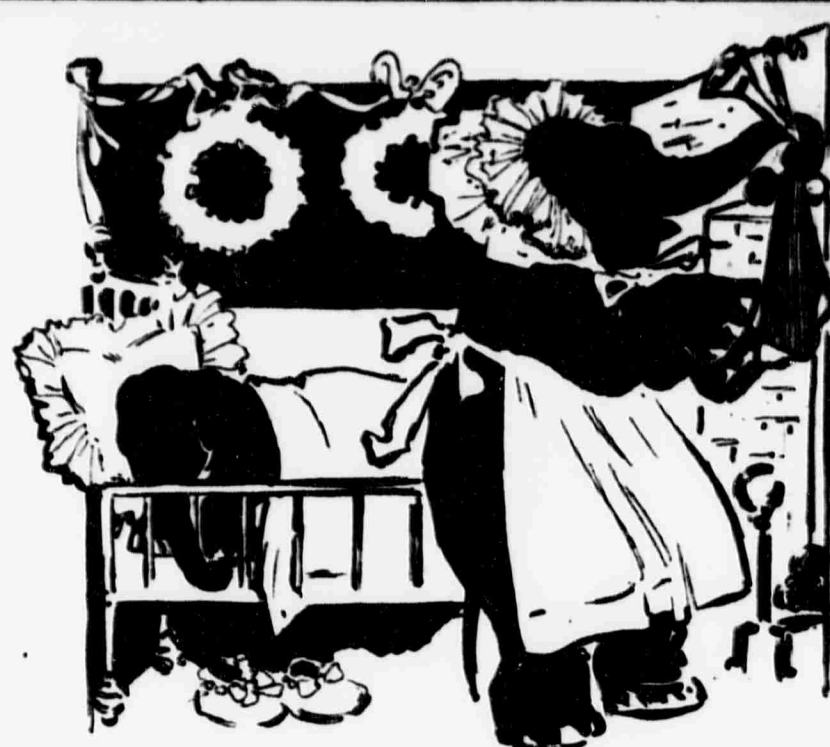
Indeed it was obvious that Mr. Raines was to be put in warm storage for the present. His spouse already was leading him from the room.

"Your feet are wet, Honey," she was expostulating. "How could you be so unkind of what it means to me? I must tuck you into bed at once. Have dinner served upstair, will you, Mrs. Glasford, with a hot lemonade please."

And a stick in it too," agreed Mrs. Glasford, enthusiastically. "There's that currant cake, there's some in the bottle yet. I'll bring that pair of real blankets up later," she added in an aside, "and the lace pillow slips."

III.

Luck had favored Mr. Raines in his



A TRUNKFUL OF PRESENTS FOR "BABY MINE."

services of a doctor and to \$7 a week during the certified illness.

But the charitable feeling kept alive in the Hippodrome community does not begin and end there. Last year, for example, there was more than the usual amount of rivalry between the chorus and the ballet. It was shown in little ways and when it was rumored that the chorus was subscribing for a big tree and had already raised \$30, the ballet girls held meetings and arranged for a bigger tree and triumphantly gathered in \$117 for it.

Then a certain story spread among the members of the ballet. Another meeting was held and the whole sum with a little more added was turned over to a member of a committee who bought with it a steamer ticket for one of the ballet girls then in the hospital and grieving herself to death for her English home, to which

the doctors said she must return if she was to recover. The tree was returned to the shop, the list of desired presents destroyed, the orders for decorations and goodies were rescinded and nothing more on the subject was heard.

The ballet girls had decided not to make the matter public and they did not. Nevertheless, before long the chorus triumphantly garlanding a particularly pyramidal tree heard the story. A meeting was held in the chorus room and from there an invitation was sent to the ballet inviting them to be present at the chorus tree and the festival was held without any of the former rivalry. Just the other day a company letter received announced the complete recovery of the invalid, who will, it is hoped, be present for this year's celebration.

On Christmas Eve the whole Hippodrome force after the regular performance presented tickets at the door of the Casino Theatre where a midnight benefit was given for one of the chorus men of the Hippodrome, who had developed symptoms of tuberculosis and whose life depended on his getting away speedily from New York. "The Pied Piper" with De Wolf Hopper in the title role was given and the box office receipts minus nothing were turned over to the chorus man, who started off immediately for Denver, where he is now established in a small business and is doing well physically and financially.

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Hippodrome also touches on various interesting ceremonials which have taken place among the foreign peoples who have been from time to time included in the productions. Rumors of several ceremonials participated in by Indians and Arabs may be merely rumors, but in the case of the Maori celebration last year outsiders were present.

These invited guests were received with much ceremony in the basement room set apart for the sitting room of the men and women of the Maori tribe. It was long after midnight. Only dim lights burned here and there and the path to the underground place was picked out by green branches with incandescents shining through.

In the middle of the room ceremonial suits of clothing were piled, and squatted about these was the entire tribe, forming a complete oval. The American manager, Mr. White, who had gathered the tribe together in New Zealand and shepherded them to the Hippodrome, was at one end

of the oval and the old chief of the tribe at the other. All the people were in full regalia and their faces had extra markings of paint used only on extraordinary occasions.

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At the end of the investiture ceremony again the Maoris squatted in an oval, the guests this time bidding together in a group fascinated and, it is admitted, fearful. The wailing of the Maoris, which on the stage is impressive enough, in the dimly lighted room, at this unusual hour, had an extra germ of weird in it, and the guests were glad enough when the ceremony of shaking hands and touching noses finished the year and they could depart in their strange trappings. The manager explained that the Maoris under English colonization had for many decades now kept the English Christmas, but had grafted on its programme their own religious and social observances.

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At the end of the investiture ceremony again the Maoris squatted in an oval, the guests this time bidding together in a group fascinated and, it is admitted, fearful. The wailing of the Maoris, which on the stage is impressive enough, in the dimly lighted room, at this unusual hour, had an extra germ of weird in it, and the guests were glad enough when the ceremony of shaking hands and touching noses finished the year and they could depart in their strange trappings. The manager explained that the Maoris under English colonization had for many decades now kept the English Christmas, but had grafted on its programme their own religious and social observances.

The members of the Hippodrome dressing room groups break into pairs

of the oval and the old chief of the tribe at the other. All the people were in full regalia and their faces had extra markings of paint used only on extraordinary occasions.

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